

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 /069 W  
-----191109Z 005892 /20

P R 190956Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4293  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2052

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN  
SUBJ: "UNDERSTANDING" IN FARAKKA DISPUTE?

REF: DACCA 1731

SUMMARY. ON APRIL 18, FOLLOWING THREE DAYS OF TALKS  
BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH IN DACCA ON THE FARAKKA DIS-  
PUTE, A BRIEF AND CRYPTIC JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED  
WHICH STATED: "AN UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN REACHED THE  
DETAILS OF WHICH WILL BE WORKED OUT AT A MEETING OF  
OFFICIALS OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO BE HELD IN NEW DELHI  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." ISSUANCE FOLLOWED WHAT PRESS DES-  
CRIBED AS ANGRY EXCHANGE OF WORDS BETWEEN JAGJIVAN RAM AND  
JOURNALISTS AND SOME OBVIOUS CONFUSION BETWEEN JAGJIVAN  
AND ADMIRAL KHAN. JAGJIVAN'S DEPARTURE WAS DELAYED  
BY LONG MEETING WITH GENERAL ZIA. QUESTION WHICH REMAINS  
UNANSWERED SO FAR IS WHAT IS NATURE OF "UNDERSTANDING" AND  
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WHAT "DETAILS" REMAIN. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT  
THINGS MAY NOT HAVE GONE WELL. END SUMMARY.

1. DELEGATIONS FOR INDIA (LED BY DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN  
RAM) AND BANGLADESH (LED BY ADMIRAL M.H. KHAN) MET IN DACCA  
APRIL 16-18 IN ANOTHER ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE GANGES  
WATER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. MEETINGS WERE

HELD AT THE FULL DELEGATION LEVEL AND ALSO BETWEEN JAGJIVAN AND KHAN SEPARATELY. ON APRIL 18, NO FORMAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE WAS HELD, BUT JAGJIVAN SPENT A REPORTED THREE HOURS WITH GENERAL ZIA, ONE RESULT OF WHICH WAS A DELAY IN JAGJIVAN'S DEPARTURE FOR NEW DELHI.

2. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AT THE AIRPORT ONLY MINUTES BEFORE JAGJIVAN BOARDED HIS PLANE TO RETURN TO DELHI. EARLIER, AT THE STATE GUEST HOUSE REPORTERS HAD ASKED JAGJIVAN ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS. JAGJIVAN REFUSED TO ANSWER AND LEFT IT TO KHAN TO REPLY. AS KHAN TRIED TO SPEAK ABOUT THE "RAMIFICATIONS AND MODALITIES" OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT, JAGJIVAN APPEARED TO LOSE HIS TEMPER AND INTERRUPTED KHAN TO SAY "THEN TAKE IT THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN SETTLED YET\*" JAGJIVAN AND THE INDIAN DELEGATION THEN LEFT FOR THE AIRPORT, WHERE KHAN AND JAGJIVAN MET AGAIN IN THE VIP LOUNGE FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. THEREAFTER, JAGJIVAN EMERGED SMILING AND THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS READ BY INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA. WHEN NEWSMEN TRIED TO ASK MEHTA FOR DETAILS, MEHTA REPLIED "FOR THE SAKE OF INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS, PLEASE DO NOT ASK MORE QUESTIONS," POSSIBLY AN ALLUSION TO JAGJIVAN'S PEEVISHNESS. THE LATTER THEN ADDED THAT THERE WAS NO NEED TO COMMENT ON A GOOD THING AND INDICATED THAT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL TALKS HAD NOW BEEN CONCLUDED. THE NEXT ROUND, IT WAS ANNOUNCED, WILL BE HELD IN DELHI "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE" AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL.

3. DURING THE THREE-DAY TALKS, JAGJIVAN MET TWICE WITH GENERAL ZIA AND ONCE WITH PRESIDENT SAYEM, THE LATTER  
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PRESUMABLY A COURTESY CALL. NO DETAILS OF THE MEETINGS WITH ZIA HAVE BEEN DISCLOSED, BUT DURING THE THREE DAYS NEITHER DELEGATION HAD INDICATED THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE AND THE MOOD IN DACCA HAD BEEN QUITE PESSIMISTIC.

4. COMMENT: THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE EXPLANATION FOR JAGJIVAN'S SEEMINGLY ERRATIC BEHAVIOR AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TALKS, BUT JAGJIVAN IS TOO EXPERIENCED A POLITICIAN TO BE RATTLED EASILY. ONE GETS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS PLAYING CAT-AND-MOUSE WITH KHAN. WE ARE NOT CLEAR YET WHAT IS MEANT BY "UNDERSTANDING" AND WHAT "DETAILS" REMAIN. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT JAGJIVAN'S SECRECY AND IRRITABILITY MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO KEEP THE BDG OFF BALANCE SO THAT THE ENSUING DELHI ROUND OF TALKS COULD BE CONTROLLED BY INDIA. IF ANY FINAL AGREEMENT WERE REACHED THEN, IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE AN INDIAN GESTURE OF MAGNANIMITY AND WOULD BE MADE IN THE OLD IMPERIAL CAPITAL. WHETHER INDIAN "IMPERIALISM" OR BANGLADESH INTRANSIGENCE OR BOTH ARE INVOLVED, FARAKKA REMAINS ON THE INDO-BANGLADESH AGENDA. THE AMBASSADOR

EXPECTS TO SEE THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ON APRIL 20, AND WE SHALL  
REPORT FURTHER ON BANGLADESHI REACTION TO THIS LATEST  
ROUND.  
MASTERS

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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